       To subscribe to A-ONE, change e-mail addresses, or unsubscribe,
               log on to our website at: www.atarinews.org
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          To download A-ONE, set your browser bookmarks to one of the
                           following sites:

                 http://people.delphi.com/dpj/a-one.htm
                     http://www.icwhen.com/aone/
                      http://a1mag.atari.org
                          Now available:
                     http://www.atarinews.org

          Visit the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi!
          http://forums.delphi.com/m/main.asp?sigdir=atari

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~ MSN Challenges AOL!   ~ People Are Talking!   ~ Songbird Update!
~ Now The Virus Hoaxes! ~ Jennifer Lopez Virus! ~ Employee Privacy!
~ Spam Bill Watered Down ~ AOL 7.0 Leaked To Web! ~ New MagiC Offer!
~ New Canadian Atari UG! ~ Napster Woos Publishers~ Auction Fees Copied

                -* Gateway Attacks In Price War *-
                 -* New Worm Targets, Reports Child Porn*-
              -* Spam Makers Settle Spat Over Double Meaning *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard   "Saying it like it is!"
   """""""""""""""""""""""""""

Like the old New England saying goes, "If you don't like the weather, wait a
minute!" Boy, what a strange couple of weeks it's been for weather around
these parts! It was almost the same as it was last year when I took off two
weeks vacation to put in a lawn and other yard work - rain! However, I've
kept busy outside when the weather permitted. I have most of my front lawn
re-loamed, and same with the pool area. Most of my flowers have been
planted (still need more!). I have one vegetable garden almost ready for
planting; and I need to till and add loam to the other one. I'm off to buy
my veggies this weekend; and hopefully the predicted rain (again!) will hold
off until I get them in! Then I can finish off laying down the remaining
eight yards of loam in the back yard - the largest area to do, but closest
to the pile of loam! I doubt that I'll be able to finish draining the water
from the pool cover and get the pool opened. Then again, it's still too
cool to enjoy the pool anyway, so why rush it! I'm beat!

It's been a quiet couple of weeks, thankfully. I've been reading more news
than usual. As I alluded to last week, it seems that the anti-spam bill
keeps getting watered down on a daily basis. Unsurprisingly, the commerce
lobbyists have been able to put up a big enough stink to get the bill that
they can live with. Personally, unsolicited e-mail is just as invasive as
postal junk mail and telemarketing. If I didn't ask for it, don't send it
to me! It's that simple! And if I do get it, there should be a way for me
to tell them I don't want it; and, if it continues, I should have the means
to do something about it. While I feel lawsuits aren't the best way to go,
why not be able to fine these "repeat offenders" with some of the fine going
to the "victim" of spam, or other unsolicited offers?!

Sure, there are supposedly "opt out" provisions in spam, but have you ever
tried them? You can't, most of the time - they don't work! And there is
rarely any "identity" attached to the message so you know who is sending you
the spam (or other unsolicited offer source). Some may be legitimate
offers, but you know damn well that most of them are scams, porno sites, or
other garbage.

I pay good money for my e-mail services, my postal mail delivery, and my
telephone services - I don't want the unsolicited garbage intruding in my
life! If they want to send it to me, pay me for the privilege! They don't
want to pay me, then I should have the means to prevent it. And if not,
then pass a bill that will deter or eliminate it. Stop pandering to the
people who make a living scamming people. Stop pandering the legitimate

businesses who use this stuff, but don't care about what my wishes are. If
you're a legitimate business, provide working provisions so that I can get
myself off of your mailing list easily.

Does it show that this kind of politics gets my blood pressure up? It's
amazing. Heck, in just the time that I've been writing this editorial and
working on this week's issue, I've had three telemarketers call! I know
because two calls came in on my computer line, and one showed up on my
CallerID as "out of area" - a sure fire clue. When I have to put my phone
number down on any type of form other than something of a personal nature, I
put down my computer line which has a phone connected to it. I get no
"personal" calls to that line, so I know that any time that phone rings,
it's an unsolicited call! When it rings, I pick up the line and hang up; at
least someone will have to pay to call me! And since I got so many
telemarketer calls on my home line, I added CallerID and voice mail. 99% of
the "out of area" calls are unsolicited calls. If for some reason I miss a
legitimate call, the voice mail gets used. Telemarketers rarely leave a
message! But I shouldn't have to go through this routine or expense to
maintain my privacy! I shouldn't have to open up 10 letters a day to learn
it's junk mail! I shouldn't have to download 20-30 e-mails daily to find out
that half of them are spam! What are your thoughts? It's time to rest up
for another day of working in the yard!

Until next time...

                              =~=~=~=

                    New MagiC Offer at Europe Shareware

Hello,

I know you get infos for A-One from various places and I can read my
(our) announces in A-One. This is why I add you (if you don't mind of
course) to my small mailing list about Europe Shareware announces. Hope
I use the right email for this kind of messages.

New MagiC offer:

To let users take advantage from the good results of the association,
MagiC is now provided with the following programmes:

- Aniplayer (registered version)
- AtarICQ (registered version)
- Jinnee
- MagiC Scripter

MagiC price remains unchanged: 99.00 Euros

Have a look at the ES MagiC webpage (French):

http://www.europe-shareware.org/atari/logiciels/magic.html

Best regards,
P. Ricard (ES)
--

Europe Shareware http://www.europe-shareware.org

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->A-ONE User Group Notes! - Meetings, Shows, and Info!
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""

                    New Canadian Users Group

Well, something happened on the News forum of Atari.org. A thread
developed regarding software, and suddenly it occurred to us that all
the posters where actually from Canada. Spread out over thousands of
miles and many days drive from one another, it was clear that we
weren't going to hold weekly meetings;-)

That said, one of the posters took it upon himself to create a web
page with BBS forum dedicated to Canadian Atari Users. Of course
everyone is welcome, the intention is to locate as many Canadian Atari
Users as possible. Hey we are here and we are not alone.

This convergence of users might just allow hardware and software
developers as well as distributors a better view of how to service the
Canadian Market.

I hope you are reading this Ken and Dan.

So check out

http://www.members.home.net/murdoc15/atari/

Later Brian

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                     PEOPLE ARE TALKING
                   compiled by Joe Mirando
                     jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. I've got a bone to pick with you...

Since we started testing the chat room portion of the online BBS system
on AtariNews.Org I've been telling you from time to time that we've
been holding weekly chats there. Participation didn't increase at all,
but I figured that people are busy these days, so I shouldn't take it
personally.

Then Tom Andrews... Mr. New Guy... mentions it ONCE in his "Keeper of

the Flame" column, and participation almost TRIPLES! What am I supposed
to think? I'll get over it of course, and maybe TJ just has beginner's
luck.

That's really all I've got to say this week... except....

Hey TJ! Next column, mention SETI@home's TEAM ATARI, will ya? <grin>

Let's get on with the news, hints, tips, and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
====================

'Bruce' asks about ROM images for an emulator:

"I have a Mega ST which I am currently not using (I'm on a 800MHz
Athlon). How can I get a Rom image to my pc to be able to run ST
programs with an emulator?"

Lyndon Amsdon tells Bruce:

"Yeah, there are TOS extractors out there, done it myself. I think
there is one included with TOSWIN or TOSBOX, one of those. I don't
have a URL, sorry, I didn't like emulating."

Christopher Friend adds:

"Go to http://lgd.fatal-design.com and download the image of the TOS
version that is in your Mega ST (Probably 1.02 or 1.04). It will be
easier...I believe there is also a link to the program that will
extract a TOS image somewhere on that site."

Mille Babic posts this about MagiCNet:

"Just have to tell that MagiCNet works all fine now.
I have managed to use apps like aFTP, aMail etc
and several ported apps to MiNT/MiNTnet like ircii-2.8, mICQ, ftp,
telnet, tracerou.

Working hard to get GlueSTiK work. Seems that one must fool the system
that MiNT is present, like set the MiNT cookie somehow. There's no
point to binary edit gluestik and change the MiNT sentence to MagX,
then maybe the author kick my a**. There should be a solution for this.

I use most apps through the u:\ drive and u:\etc\ is properly set.

Back to GlueSTiK, I'm a newbie there. I figured out that a file called
STIK_DIR.DAT should be present with a path to C:\STIK_CFG\ with the
file DEFAULT.CFG placed there. That's all?

Maybe I can't start GlueSTiK 'course I missed something?"

Peter Slegg asks Mille:

"Does it work under Mint ? I have never managed to figure out MintNet
so MagicNet might be the easiest option. ;-)

Just kidding really but if it is easy to install it could win friends even on Mint.

Have you tried the Cab overlay with SSL ?"

Mille tells Peter:

"They're MiNT-only calls like Ssystem() for the cookies in that GlueSTiK therefore it fail.

No, I haven't tried the overlay with SSL, but I'm going to. Maybe one day I can use CAB for my banking transactions."

Raymond Collins asks about an Atari-friendly ISP:

"I am thinking of changing to a national ISP. I would like to know which are the most Atari compatible ISPs in the USA?"

John Garone tells Raymond:

"Two I know of (national, not sure):

    Atlantic.net 1-800-921-9328
    Earthlink.net 1-800-327-8454

However I'm having out-going mail problems (over 30k) with Earthlink which maybe local in nature! Also, some can't connect with Stik but can with Sting (both ok here)."

Raymond replies:

"I appreciate the quick response. I the information is most helpful.

Does Earthlink have a size restriction for outgoing Email?"

John tells Raymond:

"Not supposed to have a restriction! Been ok for years! Now they've "upgraded" here and have'nt found why I can't send out larger files! I believe the problem is a local one (might have something to do with PC/MAC/PC/MAC/PC/MAC/PC/MAC/PC/MAC/PC/MAC)"

Joe Place adds his experience:

"I'm connecting with Prodigy, using STing. I don't know if it is the best solution, but I have had no problems."

Brent Garvey jumps in and adds:

"My ISP, Skyenet, allows me to sign on with just about anything that can handle PPP, TCP/IP, and has it's own browser. I periodically sign on with my Dreamcast to it!! As soon as I get a hard drive for my STE I'll be signing on with it also(once I figure out everything I need, hint, hint, to all knowledgable individuals). Right now though I mainly use my AMD based PC, and will be signing my 5 year old daughter on line shortly with her Power Mac to the same account. Universal ISP's are out there and not really expensive either (mine is $19.95 a month) but mine is also regional (IL,MI,OH,IN) if this is within your area here is the web address www.skyenet.net."

George Moulder asks about accessing desk accessories with key
combinations:

"I have been looking for a program which will call a desk-accessory
from the keyboard, and have been trying

            DC DESKEY by Michael Vederman V1.0(Beta) of 1988
                       (an accessory of 5164 bytes)

Surprisingly for its age it works reasonably well on TOS 1.62 with a
multitude of other programs loaded, but the documentation has a
apparent warning that it uses an 'accessory handler', and from my
short experience with it, I am wondering whether this produces
something resident which requires a cold-reset to clear when
accessories are changed. Can anyone enlighten me on this?

Trying to find a later, non-beta, version of this program, it appears
that even the Atari archive at the University of Michigan, which has a
large list of DC software, doesn't have this accessory at all; and the
Fast Club only has the one I already mention, the beta version, in its
collection.

Can anyone help me with a later non-beta version, or suggest a similar
SMALL program that would do the same job? There is only ONE
particular accessory that I wish to be able to call from the keyboard."

Steve Sweet tells George:

"It might help if we knew what it was you were trying to achieve and
with what.

What OS are you using, this might have a bearing on the possible
answer."

George tells Steve:

"Thanks for replying, you're the only one so far!

The answers to your two questions are in the original posting,
although I can enlarge on the second one a bit.

The OS used is TOS 1.62, and what I'm trying to do is to call an
accessory's own menu from the keyboard so that mouse doesn't have to
be used to select one of six, as this way it is easy to get the wrong
one occasionally. Using a keyboard call the right one can be selected
each time without using the eyes, or taxing the brain as much!

The program has to small, as it will be used by other people in the
group I run on floppy-based systems (ie no hard disk).

I hope you have an alternative suggestion to using the Deskey program
which seems to have a few snags but which is a credit to its compiler
because it still works in spite of how long ago it was written."

Steve tells George:

"I personally would attempt to install another copy, renamed .PRG
instead of .ACC, install in on a key-combo of choice, in theory running
this second version would make TOS realise its already running and
invoke the version in memory.

In general if a ACC wants to be callable from the keyboard it will
allow it, if it doesn't."

Lyndon Amsdon tell us that he...

"Just wondered if anyone else experiences similar problems when
printing on an accelerated Falcon. I have a Phantom (like Nemesis,
Centurbo 1) and if I print in "turbo" mode I get a lot of rubbish
printed. However if I print with Imagecopy or Papyrus (using their own
built in drivers) it prints. The only way to print with NVDI is to
switch off the turbo mode and it then prints flawlessly.

Just as a check, I switched on turbo mode and printed to an image, and
when displayed in Imagecopy it looked fine. Seems like NVDI can handle
the accelerated bus. Does the Nemesis give similar problems, the only
thing I can see it is the Yamaha chip going too fast (if the clock is
divided from system clock). It's annoying as Imagecopy can print in
turbo mode, so why not NVDI?"

Derryck Croker tells Lyndon:

"Try using the iPRN driver (if I remember correctly there's a demo
version on either the NVDI or MagiC master disks). It's also worth
experimenting with alternative outputs where offered, ie direct or via
the BIOS.

I also had a result with GEMSpooler, but the iPRN solution's better in
my opinion."

Lyndon tells Derryck:

"When I last tried the demo of iPRN I saw no speed advantage.   I guess
you can only go as fast as the printer will allow, especially since
mine is 6 years old now, Epson 200. iPRN is in my tools directory as
given when NVDI installed.

I think I'll try the routing though as you suggested above. The
problem comes is when I use a screen mode that needs to be in turbo
mode and so this is why I really need to find a solution. And well,
you know what happens when you switch turbo mode off in an extended
resolution."

Ken Springer asks for help with his TT:

"My TT030 (42 megs RAM) has seen very little use over the last 4 years.
I'm now trying to set it up and make it useable from a practical sense.
This means productive uses, no games. <G>

I use Xboot to choose different desktops. It is slightly munged, but
works. (I can't add new configurations. I have the disk, just haven't
dug it out to reinstall, but I don't believe Xboot is the source of my
problem.) I usually run Geneva 006 w/ NVDI, but in this case I need to
have a DynaCADD configuration, as Geneva and DynaCADD have problems with
each other.

So I set up a bare bones DynaCADD configuration. The current problem is
the 804 is not being detected. I'm sure it's a set up problem during
boot up, as the printer works fine under Geneva/NVDI and printing from
Papyrus 5.15.

Only 3 ACCs are installed: Diablo 630, XControl, and Edith. TThigh resolution, for those who are interested, but that shouldn't be the problem.

I'm open for suggestions as to what to change. It's amazing what you can forget in just 4 years."

Don Wolfe tells Ken:

"I use MagIC 4.10 and DynaCadd will not run under Multitasking so I run it as a single application under MagIC and all is well. FYI I also use NVDI and EASE for desktop, I have a 804 but stopped using it sometime ago as it was ghost printing and I couldn't figure out the problem. I'm using a Epson Stylus 600. If Geneva will run a APP as a single that should solve DynaCadd's problem...."

Derryck Croker adds:

"XBoot has a Y2K bug, which is the cause of this particular problem AIUI. There have been some patches for it around, perhaps someone here can help you with one."

Christopher Friend asks about his Mega's resolution:

"Does anyone know of anyway to increase the resolutions of a Mega ST4 system? I've seen projects to fit an ET4000 ISA card into the ST but they seem way too involved for me. Fitting the ST into a PC tower was one thing but I think I could build a spaceship before I'd get the ET4000 project working correctly.

Are there any alternatives?"

Djorkje Vukovic tells Christopher:

"Well, yes. There were once upon a time several graphic cards which could be plugged into Mega's expansion port. Maybe you can find one.

However, from your post it appears that you are thinking of some do-it-yourself approach. There are some possibilities here, too:

* The simplest hack would the "Overscan" which existed in several flavours, ranging from a simple switch to a more sophisticated commercial product.

There is a simple (two chips) shareware version called "Lacescan". You can achieve resolution of 704 x 480 in ST-high with a well-adjusted SM-124 monitor, but in practice the figures can be slightly lower.

* A potentially most beneficial approach would be the one which involves raising the clock frequency of the entire system to 10MHz or 12MHz. Besides getting a noticeable acceleration of everything, this is supposed to enable you to obtain resolutions of something like 800x500 (mono) or even more on a SM-124 monitor- if you can get the sync rates right. There was an article in a german computer magazine once (ST-computer, september+october 1992 ?), describing this modification, but it seems that today no one can quote -exactly- the modification needed for video circuits. I have a general idea of how it might work, but a tested schematics would be so much easier- so if you find one let me know."

Well folks, that's it for this week. If you get a chance, stop in for
the Atari chat on telnet://www.atarinews.org every Tuesday night, 9:00
eastern... GMT -5:00. 'Till next time, keep your ears open and listen
to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Songbird News! 'Dark Cloud'!
  """""""""""""""""""""""""""""""   Illumination Problem on GameBoy Advance
                                     'CART Fury'!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News   - The Latest Gaming News!
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

                Dark Cloud Emerges Onto the Playstation2

Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. announced the release of Dark
Cloud, a stirring, 3D action-adventure role-playing game available
exclusively for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. Featuring a
strong character-driven story with six playable characters, Dark Cloud
takes full advantage of the power of PlayStation 2. Combining traditional
exploration and battle elements with real-time strategy, world-building and
puzzle-solving gameplay, Dark Cloud will take gamers by storm, delivering a
graphically spectacular and truly imaginative adventure this spring.

The epic tale of Dark Cloud will captivate gamers as they undertake the
role of Toan, an innocent young hero who witnesses the horrifying
destruction of his world when the evil ''dark cloud" is unleashed,
wreaking havoc across the land. Toan awakens only to discover that the
world has been plunged into darkness; he is visited by a mysterious figure
known as the Sprit Emperor, who bestows him with the power to rescue the
world. As the sole witness and survivor of the turmoil, Toan must bravely
embark on an epic journey to rebuild the villages in the world while
rescuing townspeople, battling monsters, restoring life and faith and
unlocking the secrets of the land.

''Dark Cloud is an incredibly compelling narrative, realistically brought
to life by the technological capabilities of PlayStation 2," said Ami
Blaire, director, product marketing, Sony Computer Entertainment America
Inc. ''With its beautifully-rendered graphics, imaginative characters,
strategic gameplay, real-time interactivity and powerful storyline, this
creative new offering will surely fulfill the appetites of gamers looking
for something refreshing and original."

Dark Cloud introduces an innovative new gameplay mechanic called "GEORAMA." This unique element enables players to create, build and customize a fully interactive, three-dimensional world, and allows them to roam immediately through their newly constructed environments, all in real-time. As Toan, gamers will travel across vast lands uncovering clues for rebuilding the villages and unlocking hidden secrets. By utilizing predetermined objects such as trees, rivers, wells, homes and staircases, as well as hundreds of other items including treasures, magic spells, keys and vehicles, players can reconstruct the lush landscapes. Each community must be recreated accurately, as this will directly influence the prosperity of the environments, triggering clues for the player and unveiling pieces of the storyline as they progress.

Variable weather and time-of-day conditions add another strategic component to developing and managing the landscape. As the time of day and the weather begin to alter, items in the environment, events and conversations are also subject to change. Certain characters may be more willing to offer assistance during the daytime, for example.

Players must pay careful attention to all of the characters they encounter on their quest, as their assistance is essential to restoring the land. Dark Cloud allows gamers to unlock six different playable characters located throughout the universe, each with their own specific abilities and unique weapons. The game features a detailed weapons system, allowing players to change and increase their weapon strength. In addition, Dark Cloud contains many different types of real-time battles, encouraging players to strategically consider their opponents' strengths and weaknesses when planning attacks. Each playable character can also maintain up to 10 fully customizable weapons at one time.

Dark Cloud was released in Japan to critical acclaim last December. For the upcoming U.S. release, the Dark Cloud development team has enhanced the game further, adding additional content that amounts to a 30 percent larger game overall. New improvements to the U.S. edition include: a total new battle system, extra weapons, new monsters, enhanced enemy artificial intelligence (AI), an additional event battle in which pushing the right button combinations at the right time can mean the difference between success and failure, a completely new dungeon level with one hundred extra randomly generated maps and much more.

The independent Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) rates Dark Cloud ''T" for ''Teen.

Midway Sports Asylum Unleashes the 'Fury' On
Next-Generation Racing Games

CART Fury Combines Over-the-Top Driving
Action and Cutting-Edge Graphics in CART
Open-Wheel Racing Debut

Midway Sports Asylum, the sports brand of leading software industry publisher and developer Midway Games Inc., announced that CART Fury, the only open-wheel racing game officially licensed by Championship Auto Racing Teams, shipped for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system.

CART Fury features 15 world-champion CART drivers -- including Michael

Andretti, Christian Fittipaldi and Jimmy Vasser -- going head-to-head on real CART tracks from around the world, as well as fantasy tracks.

For even more over-the-top racing action, CART Fury revved up bombastic beats with the inclusion of music from Disturbed's ``Stupify" and Outkast's ``B.O.B. (Bombs Over Baghdad)." Dramatic sound effects and high-powered race commentary also add to the ``Fury" experience.

``CART Fury is the first videogame to showcase an action-packed, open-wheel racing experience on next-generation home consoles," said Helene Sheeler, vice president of marketing, Midway. ``Gamers and racing fans will feel the burn as they strap in for an over-the-top driving experience featuring the exciting aspects of CART racing."

Spectacular, high-adrenaline racing action, photo-realistic scenery and ultra-precision handling place CART Fury in the pole position for open-wheel racing games on PlayStation2. Like real CART racing, CART Fury positions a 28-car field with selectable driving styles and five unique gaming options (Simulation, Arcade, Season, Driving 101 and Sub-games), followed-up by seven authentic CART tracks and 11 fantasy tracks. Each track is packed with high-speed jumps and mind-blowing obstacles.

*Features total of 15 drivers with ten of CART's elite drivers from around the world plus five hidden drivers:

CART Drivers: Michael Andretti (USA), Christian Fittipaldi *(Brazil), Gil de Ferran (Brazil), Adrian Fernandez (Mexico), Mark Blundell (Britain), Juan Montoya (1999 Season Champion) (Columbia), Jimmy Vasser (USA), Max Papis (Italy), Bryan Herta (USA), Tony Kanaan (Brazil)

> Secret Drivers: Danny Sullivan, Willy T. Ribbs, Bill Lester, Jenny Sheehy, Juliana Chiovitti

*Features 18 different tracks, seven official tracks and 11 fantasy tracks:

> CART Tracks: Chicago Motor Speedway (oval), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (road oval), Houston, Texas (street course), Long Beach, California (street course), Toronto, Canada (street course), Road America (road course), Surfers Paradise, Australia (street course)

Fantasy Tracks: California Speedway (road course), Airport

Raceway (racing around airport terminals), Frankfurt, Germany

* (downtown Frankfurt at night), Chicago, Illinois (downtown Chicago and the lakefront), The Skyway (a highway construction zone), Miami, New York, Alpine Raceway, Boston's Big Dig, The Moon (stunt track), Driving School Track
* 12 secret cars
* Five different game modes: simulation, arcade, season, Driving 101 and Sub-games
* Sub-games: Last Man Standing, Duel, Block Your Opponent, Time Trial/ Practice Mode, Follow the Line, Lock On
* Licensed music by Disturbed, ``Stupify" and Outkast, ``B.O.B. (Bombs Over Baghdad)"
* Loads of crashes and car wrecks
* ``On Fire" superboost feature
* Theater: ``Opening Cinema," ``Racing Action," ``CART Fury Girls,"

``Day at the Races," ``Driver Interviews," ``CART Fury Arcade Team"
      * Multiple driving views: cockpit, behind car and ``chase-cam"

                    Illumination Problem Plagues GameBoy Advance

In the beginning of hand-held computer games, there was GameBoy. And you
could take it anywhere and play ``Tetris." And it was good.

Nine years later, in 1998, Nintendo begat GameBoy Color, which came
equipped with a color screen. And it was supposed to be better.

But unlike GameBoy, where the screen could be adjusted using the contrast
button so it was easy to see, GameBoy Color had a screen that often
required players to hold the device at odd angles to discern all the
details. There wasn't enough light. And that wasn't so good.

Now there is GameBoy Advance ($100), which will hit the shelves June 11. It
has better sound. It has extra buttons -- a switch for each forefinger, in
addition to the thumb controls. Two AA batteries are supposed to last for
15 hours. It plays virtually all previous GameBoy titles. It has a wider
screen with 50 percent more area, offers a sharper picture and boasts 500
times more colors. And that's good.

But, alas, the 2.41-inch-wide and 1.61-inch-high screen is almost
impossible to appreciate fully under many lighting conditions.

For a variety of reasons, Nintendo chose not to backlight it. Indoors, the
lighting isn't always strong enough, or the lights produce too much glare.
Even outdoors, the screen can be hard to see. As a result, I found myself
twisting and turning the unit in hopes of finding the right lighting.

There are companies that offer special lights that plug into the unit
itself. For example, Nyko Technologies (http://www.nyko.com) sells $10
flexible lights under the brand names Worm Light Plus and UFO Light. But
they only offer marginal help, and produce their own glare.

Another option is to plug GameBoy Advance directly into a television set,
but that defeats the purpose of the unit's portability.

But, illumination problem aside, GameBoy Advance is clearly a step up.

Nintendo is promising that 15 other games, including a Rayman title from
UbiSoft, ``Ready 2 Rumble Boxing: Round 2" from Midway and ``Fire Pro
Wrestling" from Bam! Entertainment, will be available when the toy hits
the shelves on June 11. Another 43 titles are due by Christmas.

True to its promise, GameBoy Advance was able to run several older GameBoy
games.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online   -   Online Users Growl & Purr!
  """"""""""""""""""""

* * * Songbird Productions * * *

END OF SCHOOL SPECIAL

Mention "June Bug" with your order placed or postmarked by June 7, 2001, and you qualify for one of the following discounts:

$ 5 off your order of $15.00-$49.95
$10 off your order of $50.00-99.95
$15 off your order of $100.00 or more

Shipping is not included in your order total when determining your applicable discount. Cannot be combined with other specials. Limited to in-stock items only. No rainchecks. Songbird may end this promotion without prior notice.

CHAMP RALLY AND SFX BACK IN STOCK

At long last, the incredibly popular new Atari Lynx release Championship Rally is back in stock at Songbird! Not only that, but Songbird has an exciting announcement to make: Champ Rally supports up to 4 players, not only 2 as listed in the manual. This means you and three friends can all link up and race head-to-head with Champ Rally!

Also, the first-ever Songbird Lynx cartridge, SFX, is back in stock in limited quantities. Get this extremely rare cart today!

SCREWDRIVERS GALORE

One of Songbird's newest items and hottest sellers is the Nintendo/Sega Security Screwdriver Set. This set includes many hard-to-find security bits, including a couple that will open NES/SNES/Sega game systems and cartridges. It retails for $29.95. Check out http://songbird.atari.net for pictures and complete details.

COLLECTABLE CARTS?

Starting immediately, all Songbird-produced Lynx cartridges will be in the new flat black style featured with Champ Rally. That means the older green carts are going the way of the dodo. A few existing carts on hand are the older style, but once they're gone, they're gone.

PROTECTOR SE

A newly updated version of the hit Jaguar game Protector is coming soon from Songbird. Check out all the details and new features on http://songbird.atari.net .

LYNX/PC SERIAL CABLE OUT OF STOCK

This handbuilt item will be out of stock until Songbird can find a new supplier. It will probably take several months.

SUMMER SCHEDULE

Look for the Songbird booth at the following summer events:

JagFest 2001 - June 30
Classic Gaming Expo 2001 - August 11-12

See you there!

Carl Forhan
Songbird Productions
http://songbird.atari.net

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                         A-ONE's Headline News
                   The Latest in Computer Technology News
                        Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

                Microsoft's MSN Issues Price Challenge to AOL

Putting the lie to reports of a potential truce between Microsoft and AOL,
Microsoft has announced a US $50 million promotion giving new customers
three months of free MSN Internet service and promising them a $21.95 per
month rate for unlimited access until January 1st, 2003.

Last week AOL, a unit of the world's largest Internet and media company
AOL Time Warner, announced that it would raise the price of its unlimited
access plan from $21.95 to $23.90.

Microsoft plans to promote its offer, which it says will save customers
$90 this year compared to AOL's prices, with a national advertising
campaign. MSN currently has about 5 million subscribers -- currently no
match for AOL's 29 million.

One analyst said the pricing move isn't likely to lure many current AOL
users.

"I think it could have some minimal effect," Gartner vice president David
Smith told NewsFactor Network. "But most people, once they go into AOL,
get hooked into so many different parts of it. They don't use it just as
an ISP; their e-mail is hooked in, too, as well as Instant Messenger,
which is available only at AOL."

"For those who treat it as just an ISP, it will cause them to look at
alternatives," Smith added. "But I think if they look closely at
alternatives, they'll find even lower-priced ones."

Microsoft claims that its call centers saw a 50 percent jump in calls from
consumers looking for Internet access in the wake of AOL's price hike
announcement. The company also claims a significant number of AOL users
have already made the switch. When AOL last raised its prices, subscriber
growth slowed temporarily, but eventually resumed its usual pace.

Analysts had widely expected AOL's price hike, and many predicted that rivals Microsoft and EarthLink would soon follow suit. Earthlink has yet to take action.

Microsoft's special promotion is only for customers in the U.S. and Puerto Rico who switch by June 30th.

Late last week, a number of media outlets reported that Microsoft and AOL had reached a truce in their growing war. Reports said a new agreement in the works would allow AOL to be bundled with the newest version of Microsoft's Windows XP operating system, due out in October.

A previous five-year agreement had AOL bundled in earlier versions of Windows and made Microsoft's Internet Explorer the default browser for AOL users. That agreement expired in January, however.

Industry analysts have pointed out that the relationship between the two companies appears to have deteriorated, in part because Microsoft's new strategies leave little room for Internet service providers like AOL.

Officials from Microsoft and AOL have not commented on the record about a possible extension of the bundling agreement.

Walmart.com to Roll Out Net Access

After a much delayed start, Walmart.com will finally roll out its own Internet service this fall with America Online, offering unlimited access for less than $10 a month.

The details, along with Wal-Mart's plans to prosper in an economic downturn, were revealed at the retailer's annual shareholders' meeting here Friday.

Wal-Mart's service, called Wal-Mart Connect, will be based on AOL's CompuServe platform.

''Our aim is to bring more of our customers online to provide them with affordable accessibility," said Cynthia Lin, a company spokeswoman, in an interview following the meeting.

''We're about easy access to more Wal-Mart," said Jeanne Jackson, chief executive of Walmart.com, in an address to shareholders. One example: Customers will eventually be able to refill prescriptions online, so their medicine would be ready for them at their local Wal-Mart store, she said.

Walmart.com had announced the alliance with AOL back in December 1999, and originally planned to roll it out in the first part of 2000.

Lin said that the site's redesign and a new technology platform had caused the delay.

Walmart.com's moves come at a time of uncertainty in the online world as experiments to offer free or low-cost Internet service have been largely unsuccessful.

Internet communications provider PSINet Inc. became the latest to succumb

to the slowing economy Friday as it filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. Meanwhile, rival Kmart's Bluelight.com, which eliminated jobs last month amid slowing sales, dropped its unlimited free service in March and now has more limited free access.

Rob LaBlatt, an analyst at Gartner Group, also questioned the buying power of those consumers that Walmart.com is aiming to reach.

''As the price of PCs are dropping and penetration is reaching the lower economic classes, we will see Internet penetration in that demographic region," said LaBlatt. ''Wal-Mart's strategy might make sense. But the question is, is this the customer they really want? At the end of the day, you have to make a profit. This may be a test."

Meanwhile, Wal-Mart officials told shareholders that they are aiming to capitalize on the recent downturn of the economy.

''We can't back off on growth," said Lee Scott, Wal-Mart's president and chief executive. ''The ball's on our shoulders ... to make sure Wal-Mart prevails."

Tom Schoewe, the retailer's chief financial officer, said many other retailers are slowing their expansion plans, but said Wal-Mart is becoming more opportunistic. It has plans to spend $9 billion this fiscal year on investment, up $1 billion from last year.

Shareholders heard Friday that food sales at the company's 952 Supercenters and its 20 Neighborhood Markets will continue to be an important focus of the company. Supercenters combine its general merchandise store formats with grocery stores, while Neighborhood markets combine a pharmacy store with a grocery format. Sam's Club warehouse stores have also expanded grocery offerings.

The retailer promised 15 to 25 new Neighborhood Markets this year and that testing of the stores is continuing. ''Then, you'll see our foot pushed on the accelerator," Schoewe said.

Scott noted Wal-Mart is the top grocer in the United States but said, ''I don't believe we're yet the best."

Tom Coughlin, president and chief executive of the traditional Wal-Mart Stores, said store managers are working to ease the checkout process while keeping products on the shelves that customers want.

Sam's Club president Tom Grimm told Friday's crowd of thousands that 25 new clubs will open this year, with another 25 relocating or expanding and an additional 70 clubs being remodeled.

Sam's will be opening a new warehouse club format on June 7 in East Plano, Texas that was designed based on customer suggestions. The store will have more space, better signs, and more logical placement of items, Grimm said. Among its features will be frozen food as the last item customers see before checking out.

Gateway Attacks in PC Price War

Direct computer seller Gateway Inc. took the offensive in the PC price war

on Wednesday, promising to undercut its major rivals, in an effort to revive profits and reverse a slide in market share.

Gateway has been on a mission to cut its operating costs and focus on moving computers, rather than making its profit from peripherals, since founder Ted Waitt returned to the helm as chief executive and promised in February to return the firm to profit this year.

''From our perspective, there's been a price war in the PC industry since we opened for business in 1985 ... so we're veterans of this -- in fact, we love it," Waitt, who launched the company from a South Dakota barn, said in a statement."

Gateway's plan would beat advertised prices for comparable consumer and business computers from Compaq Computer Corp., Hewlett-Packard Co., Dell Computer Corp., International Business Machines Corp., Sony Corp., or Toshiba Corp., it said.

Gateway said it would beat prices for any computer with at least an 800 megahertz system. Gateway's current price for an 800 megahertz system is $799.

Gateway is steering itself to return to an operating profit in the second half of the year after breaking even in the first half, consistent with its forecast made in February.

But the discounts could erode the gross profit margin percentage, which is sales minus cost of sales as a percent of revenue, even as unit sales rose.

Waitt told Reuters that Gateway expected to meet its earnings forecast, despite the possible decline in gross profit margin, by selling more computers as a result of the new pricing offer.

Gateway promised in February to cut costs and take some short-term pains to do so. It took $533 million in one-time charges on sales of $2.03 billion in the first quarter, ended March 31, and Gartner Dataquest said Gateway's share of the U.S. market dropped in the first quarter to 9.1 percent from 8.5 percent.

Waitt said Gateway expected to see an incremental increase in market share as a result of the pricing offer. According to the results in two test markets, consumer consideration of Gateway PCs dramatically increased, Waitt said.

He declined to comment specifically on how many more computers Gateway expected to sell as a result of the new offer. ''We'll see," Waitt said.

Waitt added that he believes Gateway gained some market share since the first quarter.

''We feel right now, based on the indices we have and the research we do, we are taking share, but it's hard to verify," he said of the consumer PC market. ''We know, in small business, we're taking share," he added.

Personal computer makers are often compared to direct seller Dell, but Gartner analyst Martin Reynolds said Gateway's move would chiefly challenge big rivals that, like it, focused on consumer sales.

Gateway had room to cut operating costs in line with Dell, he said. Gateway's first quarter operating costs, not including charges, were 18.8

percent of sales and falling, compared to 10.7 percent at Dell in the most recent quarter.

IBM, by comparison, had a margin of expenses to sales of 24.3 percent, similar to other big players, and while the personal computer division was probably leaner than that, it was under pressure to produce similar profits, Reynolds said.

''This is a question of last man standing. Gateway and Dell are going to put tremendous financial pressure on those other manufacturers," he said.

The big firms will take the biggest damage, forecast Gateway Vice President of Consumer Marketing David Turner, when asked in an interview who would bear the brunt of his firm's attack. ''Clearly HP and Compaq, but also Dell and others," he said.

Gateway would only beat the competition by a dollar, he said. The company did not expect to have to cut prices much because its prices already tended to be low.

The pricing offer is mainly intended to raise its profile by ''taking price off the table" in customers' minds, Turner said.

''The question was do you think you will have to butcher your prices. I don't think so," he said.

To announce its plan, San Diego, California-based Gateway rolled out a nationwide print and television advertising campaign with the tagline, ''PC Price War ...? Cool."

Napster Out to Woo Music Publishers As Allies

As the fight over digital musical copyrights moves into a new stage, song-swap service Napster said it is looking for a new ally -- music publishers.

''I'm spending a lot of time thinking about publishing," Napster chief executive officer Hank Barry told Reuters.

''We could get all the labels in the world on the service but we still couldn't do anything without the publishing rights," said Barry during a recent interview.

Barry echoed what many big label executives are grappling with as a growing dispute over publishers' royalty rates threatens to undermine recently announced plans to launch commercial services as alternatives to Napster.

The major recording labels and music publishers, who own rights to underlying musical compositions, are at odds over on-demand or interactive music streamed over the Internet, which allows consumers to listen to whatever song they want whenever.

Napster, the popular song-swap service, has seen usage drop sharply to 150,000 new software downloads per day from its rate of 250,000 back in February due to a court order barring it from offering copyrighted songs as a result of a lawsuit by the big labels.

While the major music companies grabbed a lot of headlines with lawsuits against Napster and MP3.com over the past two years, the lines in the sector are now blurring as big labels like Vivendi Universaland Bertelsmann AG team up with online players like MP3.com and Napster, respectively.

The labels have aligned themselves into two online camps including MusicNet -- a joint venture between RealNetworks, AOL Time Warner's Warner Music, EMI Group Plc and Bertelsmann's BMG -- and Sony Music,and Vivendi Universal's Duet subscription service.

As the sector buzzes with behind-the-scenes activity, the publishing debate continues to simmer. Many of the big music publishers are part of the same companies that own the labels.

Admitting the user experience has changed for Napster fans, Barry said Napster was going full-speed ahead with compliance efforts and plans to launch a new, pay service by summer.

Barry said he was talking with many parties, including the big labels, technology companies, such as Microsoft Corp.and music publishers to bolster the service.

Stressing the importance of publishing rights, Barry said he sees big opportunities for subscription services even without big label content.

''Our internal research shows that a significant amount of users will pay for the new Napster service even without major label content. That makes music publishing really important," he said.

''The new service is being built to enable all artists and songwriters to receive payments whether they're on a major label or not," he said.

Barry said the service would launch by summer.

Barry said he continues to talk with MusicNet to work out a licensing deal for its service once it goes public and is very interested in talking with Sony and Universal's Duet.

''We're always hopeful about licensing deals with MusicNet and Duet but we have nothing to announce right now," he said.

''It's hard for me to believe that things could move any faster (in this space). We're just focusing on staying the course, complying with the injunction and talking with as many people as we can," Barry said.

Napster's overture to publishers comes as tensions rise between the big labels and publishers, but also as Napster itself faces a copyright infringement lawsuit by publishers.

''Obviously we have a class action on behalf of thousands of publishers against Napster, but it is quite clear that Napster appreciates the importance of publishing," said Carey Ramos, an attorney for music publishers.

''In order for Napster to launch a legitimate service, they need a license from the copyright owners of songs," he said.

Last week, the U.S. Copyright Office received comments from several parties and companies, including Napster, who sided with the National Music Publishers' Association (NMPA) on several fronts.

Both Napster the NMPA urged the Copyright Office to reject calls by record labels to initiate a rule making procedure on the issue. The publishers said the labels had called for a moratorium on payment of certain royalties to songwriters and music publishers for use of their works over the Internet.

''Before the labels launch those services, they need to have our licenses and they could hold this process up from one to two years with the process they are requesting through the copyright office," said NMPA president Edward Murphy, who confirmed he has held preliminary discussions with Napster.

Recording industry executives contend the publishers are the biggest stumbling block to creation of legitimate online music services.

EBay Fee Move Likely to Be Copied

People across the country who sell things on eBay are furious with the auction site because of its recent move to charge subscription fees for a popular piece of software that makes it easier to list items.

In irate notes on message boards and e-mails to the company, sellers accuse eBay of getting greedy and belying its warm and fuzzy community-focused image. Some are threatening a class-action suit because older versions of the software, which cost as much as $200, stopped working.

Everyone else who uses the Internet should take note.

An increasing number of companies, including giant Microsoft Corp., are expected to embrace subscription models and move away from selling software for a one-time fee. The companies say they simply can't afford to keep giving away free upgrades.

''The trend is undeniable - it's just a question of how long it's going to take," said Rob Enderle, a research fellow with Giga Information Group. ''The existing model isn't working. You can certainly try to live in the past, but whether you're a Microsoft or an eBay, you're probably going to get bypassed."

Microsoft has introduced subscription-based options for business software, including the new Office XP, and called the move a ''first step toward offering software as a service" - meaning subscription plans for all users. Oracle Corp. gives away sales force management software for now, but has indicated it eventually will charge a subscription.

The eBay software was known as Auction Assistant, and now is called Seller's Assistant. Because it helps eBay users post attractive presentations of their products and manage the transactions, it is popular among people who list several items at once.

It was created by Pennsylvania-based Blackthorne Software, which eBay acquired in 1999.

Users say they bought Auction Assistant and its supercharged version, Auction Assistant Pro, for $50 to $200 over the years with the understanding that Blackthorne would upgrade the software for free when

improvements were available, or when needed because of technical changes in the massive eBay site.

In February, Blackthorne informed users Auction Assistant was being upgraded, taking on the new Seller's Assistant name and switching to a subscription model – $4.99 a month for the basic version, $15.99 for Pro. Existing Auction Assistant users were told they could get a year's subscription to the new software for free.

On April 1, Blackthorne's president, John Slocum, wrote on the company's online discussion board that almost two-thirds of Auction Assistant users had switched to Seller's Assistant. He added that, after April 30, Blackthorne ''cannot assure users that Auction Assistant will continue to be fully functional or compatible with the eBay site."

Despite the warning, many users were caught off guard when their Auction Assistant programs stopped working last week. They accused eBay of intentionally making Auction Assistant useless to force them to buy the new software.

''Why weren't we just grandfathered in, since we already owned the same program?" said Cindy Izon of Tulsa, Okla., who sells decorative dolls on eBay. ''It makes me so mad."

Dan Rushing of Albuquerque, N.M., lamented what he called eBay's ''extreme arrogance."

Collectibles seller Carol Hudson of Chattanooga, Tenn., wrote in an e-mail interview: ''Most of us have been angry with them for two or three years because of their 'do it our way or get lost' attitude. But this time, they have really gone too far and shown their true colors."

EBay spokesman Kevin Pursglove said nothing was done intentionally to disable older versions of Auction Assistant. He said what occurred is most likely ''the natural obsolescence that's going to be developing any time a piece of software ages."

He also said the subscription model is necessary to finance continued improvements to the Blackthorne software, and disputed suggestions the company was taking unfair advantage of its dominating position in the online auction business.

''I realize that's a fairly common remark when any customer has a certain level of frustration, but it doesn't do the business any good to 'bleed people dry,"' Pursglove said. ''We want users to continually come to eBay, to continually use the Blackthorne programs to sell on eBay."

Arthur Newman, head of Internet research at ABN Amro Inc., supported eBay's stance and said it is part of the new economics of the Web.

''I think the Internet over the last few years has spawned a whole generation of people who expect to get everything for free and forget you have to pay for services," he said. ''If people can't make money providing them, they're going to stop providing them. There's a limit to good will. EBay is hardly alone in starting to charge for things."

AOL 7.0 Leaked To The Web

Some Web surfers got a sneak peek at an internal alpha edition of Version 7.0 of America Online Inc.'s client software Wednesday when it was made available for download from several Web sites devoted to AOL software and insider information.

AOL quickly blocked the software from signing on to the service, but not before a significant number of people were able to log in and take screen shots of the software.

What these users saw were changes to the ubiquitous "Welcome Screen" and Buddy List features. Other than those areas, most of the interface appeared to be identical to AOL 6.0.

One feature not in the alpha is the much-hyped Komodo browser module, which would allow AOL members to use third-party Internet browsers, such as one from Netscape, instead of Microsoft Corp.'s Internet Explorer.

As with all alpha editions of software, there may be many more additional features and changes to the software before it is released to the public.

AOL 7.0, code named Taz, has been the source of rumors and speculation for several months. Internal AOL documents have indicated that Taz will be released in August barring any unforeseen technical issues. Taz is also expected to feature the Komodo browser engine by the time it reaches beta testing.

At the same time, AOL, of Vienna, Va., is working on several other initiatives, including a client code-named Steppenwolf designed for use with Windows XP, the next version of Microsoft's client operating system due this fall. (Steppenwolf is currently in beta testing, available for AOL members at Keyword: Beta.)

AOL is reportedly in negotiations with Microsoft to have the Steppenwolf client bundled with Windows XP.

This isn't the first time alpha versions of AOL clients have escaped the company's control. In April, an alpha version of CompuServe 2000 with Netscape as the internal browser was discovered. Before AOL 6.0 was sent to beta testers, alpha versions of that software were available on the Web for a period of time before AOL sued the sites for copyright infringement.

New Worm Targets, Reports Child Porn

On the heels of the Linux fix-it Cheese worm, a computer virus that tracks down child pornography and reports it to officials has been released by British hackers, but kiddie porn opponents are not impressed.

When launched, the latest worm, called "Noped" (for VBS.Noped.A@mm) and termed a worm because of its ability to infect and spread itself via e-mail, searches for JPEG (picture) files it deems associated with child pornography.

The worm is bundled with the e-mail addresses of government agencies, including the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation and Interpol, which are alerted if a matching JPEG is discovered.

"Noped changes the home page in Internet Explorer and searches all hard drives and mapped drives for specific .jpg or .jpeg file names," said a description of the worm at Symantec's Anti-virus Research Center (SARC).

"If found, the worm sends a message to one random recipient from a list of government agencies."

While the worm may succeed in drawing attention to the fight against child pornography, it still endangers users' systems and may inaccurately or inadvertently target someone's files, according to SARC director Vincent Weafer.

"This is a malicious virus," Weafer told NewsFactor Network. "It does a number of things to damage peoples' machines. It's also using a crude mechanism, so it's equally likely to pick out a legitimate file."

The e-mail-borne virus, with a subject line of "FWD: Help us ALL to END ILLEGAL child porn NOW," has an attachment titled "END ILLEGAL child porn NOW.TXT...vbe," according to Symantec. The message reads "Hi, just a quick e-mail. Please read the attached document as soon as you can. Thanks."

Once activated, the worm displays a number of anti-child porn laws in Notepad and mails itself to all e-mail addresses in an infected user's address list. Noped will also mail out a listing of files matching child porn criteria to a random recipient from a list of law enforcement agencies.

"Hi, this is Antipedo2001," says the automatically e-mailed message. "I have found a PC with known Child Pornography files on the hard drive. I have included a file listing below and included a sample for your convenience."

Julie Posey, director of Louisville, Colorado-based Pedowatch, told NewsFactor that hackers and virus writers may have good intentions, but the worm is basically useless in prosecuting child pornographers and those who view the illegal materials.

"The problem with having a virus that does something like this is that evidence obtained illegally is not admissible in court," Posey said. "Hackers find (gigabytes) and gigs of child porn and then report it. That's great, but it's obtained illegally."

Posey, whose organization investigates child pornography and works with law enforcement for its removal, also said the issue of distinguishing child porn and the fact that it is illegal to transmit any child porn also complicate the matter.

Posey, who told NewsFactor she would prefer to see automatic messages, warnings and law citations accompany the numerous child porn sites on the Internet, said officials are currently incapable of handling the offensive material.

"Law enforcement is way behind when it comes to child porn," she said. "There's so much of it out there, they can't keep up."

Posey added that officials are not trained to combat the crimes and technologies involved with child porn, saying "even with a worm that gives it to them, they'll still be way behind in figuring it all out."

Noped is similar to the Cheese worm, which tracks down and patches

security holes in Linux servers, both in its ability to spread and in its seemingly benevolent nature. Neither Noped nor the Cheese worm are expected to cause extensive damage or spread widely, according to security experts.

Still, observers are quick to point out that the worms are capable of taking over computer systems and causing unintended side effects and damage. Weafer, who said political and ideologically-based viruses are nothing new, added that the code is also illegal.

"In our minds, this is malicious code that includes data export and invasion of privacy," he said.

Newest Internet Hoax Spreads Like a Virus

Recent bouts with worldwide viruses have the e-mailing public a little edgy, and the latest thing being spread is a virus hoax.

A hoax that originally circulated in Portuguese but which began appearing in English this week tells recipients that the "SULFNBK.EXE" file on their Windows 98 operating system is infected with a virus that will trash their hard drives on June 1st.

The warning e-mail gives explicit directions on how to delete the .EXE file, which is actually a harmless MS Windows utility used to restore long file names.

The message reads in part: "This virus is programmed to become active June 1. Because of the delay in activation, it does NOT show up on virus detection software such as McAffe or Norton. I checked my computer this morning and found the virus, and so did several others on my e-mail address list."

"No one knows how long the virus has been in the system," the message continues. "It may have been there for several months already. On June 1, this virus will become active and wipe out all files and folders on the hard drive of your computer."

Following the message are instructions on how to delete the file. Deleting the file may not cause noticeable problems for the user, but it can only be restored by reinstalling Windows 98.

To further complicate matters, there is an actual virus circulating that contains an attachment labeled "Sulfnbk.exe," Ian Hameroff, business manager of security solutions at Computer Associates, told NewsFactor Network.

"If someone actually receives an attachment by the same name, it may have the "magistr" virus," Hameroff said. "But, as would be the case with any virus, as long as the users are protecting themselves" with anti-virus software, there's no need to worry, he said.

But Computer Associates categorizes hoaxes, real viruses and trojans as "malware" -- short for malicious software. And according to the company, hoaxes can be as damaging as actual viruses.

"They cause unnecessary panic," Hameroff said. "Some people will actually

go out and delete the file. Particularly within a business or organization, that's taking up productive time for employees."

It is difficult to gauge how widespread the current hoax is, but many computer security companies, including Computer Associates, Trend Micro, Symantec and the CERT Coordination Center, have posted warnings or alerts.

Though there seems to be an endless stream of virus hoaxes, Computer Associates says actual viruses outnumber the phonies. And there are ways of spotting a fake virus warning, Hameroff told NewsFactor.

Often, the warning e-mails have a chain letter quality to them, instructing recipients to forward the message to everyone to whom they've ever sent an e-mail, or, like the Sulfnbk.exe, to everyone they've e-mailed in the last few months.

Also, virus hoaxes often cite as authorities organizations that would not usually be involved in giving virus warnings, or competing companies that would generally not collaborate on a warning, such as IBM and Microsoft, for example.

Virus Poses As Nude Jennifer Lopez Photos

By promising to display pictures of actress Jennifer Lopez naked, the destructive Chernobyl virus is again spreading across the Internet via e-mail.

Antivirus-software maker Panda Software issued an alert on Thursday after receiving about eight reports of the virus, including one from a major aviation company. The aviation company discovered the virus before it could do any significant damage. Panda has given the virus its highest rating of potential risk, distribution and destruction.

One of Panda's competitors, Symantec, considers the virus less of a threat, saying it received only six reports of the virus on Wednesday, indicating that the virus was spreading too slowly to cause any real damage.

But the Jennifer Lopez files pose a serious threat regardless, said Steve Demogines, director of tech support at Panda. Hiding behind the fictitious photos of Lopez is the lethal Chernobyl virus, which can erase content on files and disable computers.

The other factor that makes the Lopez file dangerous, Demogines said, is that it uses a "social engineering" technique that could prove effective. The term social engineering refers to the practice of coming up with intriguing e-mail subject lines to fool the unsuspecting into opening virus-infected files.

The Lopez file's suject line reads "Where are you" and the attachment is titled JenniferLopez_Naked.JPG.VBS.

"Virus writers are still successfully using the social engineering technique to trick the unwary user," said Panda in a statement on Thursday.

The Jennifer Lopez file is the latest in a string of mass-mailing worm

viruses--copycat versions of the Anna Kournikova virus, which spread
across the globe in February by encouraging victims to click on a supposed
picture of Russian tennis star Anna Kournikova.

The Anna virus had the ability to mail itself to a large number of
Internet users but did not damage computer systems. Its main threat was
that it might clog servers. The virus inside the Lopez file packs a more
destructive payload.

When the W95/CIH virus is unleashed, it goes on a search-and-destroy
mission, Panda said in a statement.

The virus seeks out and overwrites code on specific files on the hard
disk, stripping them of their content. The virus also infects the Windows
installation folder and can disable a computer by overwriting the
motherboard, rendering it useless and preventing a user from booting up,
said Demogines.

U.S. Falling Behind in Cyber Combat

As the latest computer virus -- this one featuring actress Jennifer Lopez
-- makes its way around the Internet via e-mail, the number of people who
wonder if the government is up to the task of providing electronic
security is growing.

The Jennifer Lopez file, which spreads the highly destructive Chernobyl
virus, is the latest in a string of mass-mailing worm viruses -- copycat
versions of the Anna Kournikova virus which spread across the globe last
February.

While these kinds of viruses have the potential for causing millions of
dollars in damage, at least they are usually detected early in the
process. It's the unannounced hack attacks and cybercrime that comprise
the real problem facing both government and business. And from all
appearances, the bad guys are way ahead.

John Collingwood, the FBI's assistant director for public affairs,
concedes the government is stymied, saying there is little it can do at
this point.

"The new technology allows people to commit crimes in the United States
from anywhere else in the world," Collingwood told NewsFactor Network.
"Unfortunately, this is a brand new area for us -- and we're not sure of
what the implications will be."

If this sounds like someone who has already lost the fight, then consider
the words of Rich Pethia, director of the Software Engineering Institute
at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: "There is no
good way to defend against sophisticated hackers."

Pethia's words are all the more alarming because his unit is in charge of
the U.S. Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT), which is supposed to be
the early warning system against cybercriminals. In one of its most
embarrassing moments to date, the unit was crippled last week by a
denial-of-service attack.

No one has thrown in the towel, but several experts contacted by

NewsFactor admitted that if the battle against cybercrime is likened to a baseball game, the opposition is throwing a no-hitter and it's late in the contest.

In support of this analogy, the University of California at San Diego estimates that about 4,000 sites come under denial-of-service attacks each week, including some of the largest and most popular business and government portals.

According to a survey of 538 computer security specialists conducted by the FBI and San Francisco's Computer Security Institute, both the number of computer penetrations and the economic losses associated with them are soaring.

Participants in the survey reported that losses climbed to US$378 million in 2000, after reporting losses of about U$266 million the previous year. What's worse, it appears that losses this year have already topped those in 2000.

Pilot Network Services, an Alameda, California firm that makes firewall security software, reports that in April the company discovered 95 million attempted entries had been detected by computers using Pilot's protective program -- a 220 percent increase over the number detected the previous month.

Even if the government can manage a frontal attack on its sensitive military materials, hackers are now going through the back door by tapping into major university systems to get to classified information.

At the University of Washington, for example, hackers are reportedly gaining access to military weapons research by going through university research labs. The school's online systems are left open 24 hours a day so that academic researchers can work freely. Of course, that helps electronic criminals gain access.

And now there is a new set of players causing trouble: unhappy dot-com workers who have lost their jobs.

As layoffs become more common at technology companies, say authorities, an increasing number of disgruntled or fired employees are hacking their former companies in revenge.

"The whole nature of computer crimes has changed," agent Greg Walton of the FBI's San Francisco area computer intrusion squad told NewsFactor.

"The network administrator is probably the last guy who finds out someone got fired and he doesn't cut off your access. Or, if the network administrator gets fired, he still has access."

The government's latest response to all of this? It plans to invest $8.6 million in scholarships for a "cybercorps" of 200 computer-security students who will wage war in cyberspace.

Monitoring Shrinks Worker Privacy Sphere

Employee privacy in the United States is under siege as old rules for what employers can and cannot monitor give way to a regime of everyday

observation, patchy legal protections and conflicting business priorities.

Software that pours over intimate e-mail correspondences, tracks worker performance or thwarts employee theft has narrowed the realm of privacy for employees in offices, factories, on the road or telecommuting from home.

Three-quarters of U.S. businesses now electronically monitor employees in some fashion, double the rate of just five years ago, according to a recent study by the American Management Association, a New York-based corporate training and consulting group.

Meet the downside of the low-cost, easy-to-use technologies that have powered the technology revolution of recent years.

''As the work has been automated, so also has the watching been automated," said Eric Rolphe Greenberg, director of management studies at the AMA.

''Now that the nature of the work has changed, so also has the nature of the supervision," said Greenberg, the author of the AMA's annual study of electronic workplace monitoring.

Vague policies allow Web and e-mail monitoring software not only to track when an employee views sexually explicit material but potentially any intimate subject. Voice mail retrieval software does the same. Keystroke and screen-capture software can check what you are working on at any moment in time. Punching the time clock takes on new meaning when every movement can be traced. Field sales representatives have their movements tracked by location-based tracking systems in new wireless phones. Some hospitals now require nurses to wear badges on their uniforms so they can be located constantly.

Managers, business consultants and legal experts say this rise in corporate curiosity is required to keep pace with free-wheeling communications technologies in the Internet age.

The AMA's survey of major U.S. firms found that 77.7 percent now record and review some sort of employee communications and activities on the job.

For example, Internet connections were monitored by 63 percent of the more than 1,600 companies responding to the survey. Telephone use was tracked by 43 percent. Computer use such as time logged on or keystroke counts was monitored by 19 percent. Video surveillance for security purposes was used by 38 percent.

In addition, the annual survey found that more than a quarter of respondent companies fired people for misuse of company technology and three-quarters have disciplined people.

''People act as if they have privacy protection. They don't stop to think they are under scrutiny," said Stewart Baker, head of the technology law practice at Washington, D.C.-firm Steptoe & Johnson.

''Surprisingly for such a law-happy society, there are few limits on what employers can do in the electronic age with respect to the privacy of their employees," said Baker, a cyber-law expert who was former general counsel of the U.S. National Security Agency.

While federal laws against wiretapping prevent monitoring of employee conversations under most circumstances, there are few limitations on

monitoring such things as voice mail, e-mail or Web monitoring -- any information that is stored and retrieved instead of directly intercepted, as live phone calls must be.

''Work-place privacy is a contradiction in terms. It's an oxymoron," the AMA's Greenberg said. ''I know the illusion of privacy is there, but you are not using your own stuff. The phone, the keyboard, the connections, the job itself -- they don't belong to you; they belong to the company, legally."

Most management and legal experts agree that simple prior notice to employees that their activities will be watched give employers wide freedom to monitor. Consultants advise companies to use notice as a way to ''get over employees' expectations of privacy," which is an issue of social etiquette rather than a legal one.

The Internet has given a powerful window on the world to every office worker with a personal computer and a Web connection. It has also proven to be a powerful distraction, as the spike in usage of sites ranging from eBay to E+Trade during work hours reveals.

The very definition of what is private is up for grabs as lines blur between working hours, personal time and home life. What privacy rights do employees have when working on employer-supplied laptops from home, for example?

Meanwhile, the porous nature of electronic mail communications makes it quick and easy for employees to gossip with friends or business associates outside the organization.

The informality of the medium lends itself to the rapid transfer of a company's trade secrets outside the organization. What they don't send via e-mail angry employees can carry on a floppy disk in their shirt pocket as they walk out the door.

''Employers are much more aware and much more nervous about productivity, legality and security, and these issues are behind the increase," Greenberg said of the spiraling use of monitoring.

But it's a far cry from a century ago when Ford Motor Co. used its Sociological Department to ensure that employees lived ''unblemished" personal lives at home, the outgrowth of the intrusive management practices of 19th century industry.

Between productivity issues and competitive threats lie a wasp's nest of potential employer liability if computer systems are not policed for off-color jokes, mean-spirited gossip, or sexual harassment that show a pattern of discrimination.

E-mails and voicemails are frequently the smoking guns in corporate litigation. Standard operating procedure for any plaintiff's attorney in a corporate legal battle is to demand production of electronic records.

Still, most monitoring is directed at specific job roles and not done around the clock, Greenberg said.

Because of obvious limitations on time and financial resources the watching is not perpetual and can't be. It mostly consists of keyword searches on Web use and e-mail, just as companies have looked over telephone bills for decades.

``Big Brother is snoozing more often than he's watching," Greenberg said.

U.S. Slices and Dices Spam Ban

The winner of the latest political squabble in Washington, D.C., may be spammers, after the U.S. House Judiciary Committee approved a watered-down substitute of a Commerce Committee-approved bill on unsolicited e-mail last week.

While Judiciary Committee chairman F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr. (R-Wisconsin) warned that a slow approach should be taken to e-commerce regulation and expressed concern about "making a federal case out of a mere annoyance," the author of legislation that would allow Internet service providers (ISPs) and consumers to sue to stop spam and penalize senders claimed that her spam bill has been stripped of consumer rights.

"This amendment says as long as you are shameless about being a professional pornographer and don't lie about who you are, you have a perfect right to send unsolicited e-mail to anyone, including children," said Representative Heather Wilson (R-New Mexico).

"That's wrong, and reasonable people know it is wrong. There is a right of free speech on the Internet, but there is no right to force people to listen."

Wilson's Unsolicited Commercial Email Act, similar to a spam bill approved nearly unanimously in the House of Representatives last year, would give consumers and ISPs the right to sue spammers if requests to stop spamming are not effective. The House Energy and Commerce Committee in March approved a version of the bill that allowed consumers to sue companies using misleading tactics for as much as $50,000.

However, the Judiciary Committee focused on spammer identity, stripping the legislation of the lawsuit provisions and, according to Wilson's office, consumer and ISP protections.

The Judiciary version of the bill mirrors legislation from Representative Bob Goodlatte, R-Virginia. A Goodlatte representative told NewsFactor Network that even though he co-sponsored Wilson's spam bill, he aligned himself with the amended version from the Judiciary Committee, of which he is a member.

"He just feels like the narrower bill really gets to the heart of the matter," said Goodlatte spokeswoman Michelle Semones. "Some provisions of the Wilson bill raised some concerns from the financial services industry."

"There's no consumer protection in that version of the bill," Wilson spokesman Kevin McDermott told NewsFactor. "There's nothing that allows consumers to block unwanted, unsolicited e-mail from repeatedly hitting their inbox. There's nothing that allows ISPs to control their own network."

Sensenbrenner spokesman Jeff Lungren acknowledged major changes in the legislation, telling NewsFactor that the congressman has concerns about hurting e-commerce.

"Today's committee action correctly focuses this legislation on those who send fraudulent e-mail or pornography using technical fraud to conceal the sender's identity," said a statement from Sensenbrenner, who chairs the Judiciary Committee. "I believe this legislation addresses fraudulent e-mail without drifting into the first major federal regulation of online commerce."

The Judiciary amendment offered by Sensenbrenner and Representative John Conyers (D-Michigan) prohibits the intentional transmission of 10 or more unsolicited e-mail messages to one or more computers in the U.S. while knowing that the message has false sender identity information in the header.

Wilson complains that the Judiciary version of the bill, which she believes does not discourage spam, is a reaction to lobbying by industries that rely on spam.

"The financial services industry, which by some estimates is the fastest-growing source of junk e-mail on the Internet, lobbied hard to protect their right to send junk e-mail to consumers who are not their customers," said Wilson's statement.

"It's the only kind of advertising where a million ads cost as much as one ad. Spam is like sending junk mail 'postage due' and you have no way to stop it."

Wilson argues consumers should have the same protection from spam that they do from other unsolicited marketing efforts.

"You have a right to stop telemarketers from calling you," she said. "There is an outright federal ban on junk faxes. You even have a right to stop junk mail from coming to your regular mailbox. You should have the right to tell a company to stop sending junk e-mail to your in box and the in boxes of your children."

With two versions of the spam legislation moving forward, it will be up to the House Rules Committee to determine what comes next. Wilson said she will work with House leadership and the Judiciary Committee to produce a bill that merges the two versions for a vote by the full House.

"There are a number of steps to go," said Wilson spokesman McDermott. "Congresswoman Wilson is confident that the bill that goes to the House floor will look like the Commerce Committee version, not the Judicial Committee version."

While a House vote is not expected until later this summer, Senate Communications Subcommittee chairman Conrad Burns (R-Montana) recently introduced a spam bill that is similar to the House Judiciary version in the Senate.

                    Spam Makers Settle Spat Over Double Meaning

Stick a fork in it, Spam's squabble with cyberspace is done.

Hormel Foods Corp., the maker of the legendary spiced lunch meat made of pork shoulders and ham and creator of the Spamburger Hamburger, says it can

live with Spam's double meaning as junk electronic mail.

In a message posted on the official Spam Web site
(www.spam.com/ci/ci-in.htm), Hormel says it has no qualms with the
alternate meaning as long as one writes SPAM, the meat, in all capital
letters, and spam, the unsolicited e-mail, in lowercase.

While the policy is not new -- a Hormel spokeswoman said it was put up more
than a year ago -- the posting got extra attention following an
anti-junkmail conference called SpamCon held earlier this month in San
Francisco.

There was a time when Hormel was not so open to alternate meanings of Spam
for fear they would injure the brand name.

At one point, the company challenged Jim Henson Productions for the
creation of a Muppet named Spa'am, the high priest of a tribe of wild boars
that worships Miss Piggy, the porcine Muppet diva. A court threw out the
claim in a 1996 ruling.

And in 1997, the company took on a junk e-mail entrepreneur named Sanford
''Spamford" Wallace, who posed with cans of Spam to promote his business.

Today, the story is different.

''We do not object to use of this slang term," the Spam Web site states,
''although we do object to the use of our product image in association with
that term."

Julie Craven, Hormel's director of public relations, said the decision was
made to accept the e-mail meaning of spam after the term's popularity
mushroomed.

''It certainly was at a point where it was becoming so much out there, and
so much a part of popular culture," she said.

Spam, the meat, is stuck in distinctive tins and shipped around the world
and is apparently very popular in Hawaii, according to the Spam Web site.

The slang meaning of ''spam" is said to have been inspired by a skit by
British comedy troupe Monty Python in which a group of Vikings mutter
''Spam, Spam, Spam," with increasing volume, drowning out normal
conversation.

Electronic junk mail hits Internet users worldwide, clogging the wires with
solicitations for everything from get-rich-quick schemes to pornography.

Spam is not the first brand name to take on an additional, and sometimes
unwanted, meaning. DuPont Co.'s non-stick coating Teflon had been used to
describe Mafia boss John Gotti as the ''Teflon Don" for his ability to
keep criminal charges against him from sticking.

While the score with junk e-mail has been settled, Hormel's Craven said the
company still plans to vigorously defend the brand name.

''If somebody used it inappropriately, they could very well hear from us,"
she said. ''Next to our employees, our brand marks are our most important
asset."

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